



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

opi.mt.gov

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To: School Food Authority Administrators

From: Christine Emerson, Director
School Nutrition Programs



Re: Free and Reduced-Price School Meals Application

The following updated materials for households applying for free or reduced-price meals are available on the School Nutrition Programs website at www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/index.html in the School Programs Forms and Guidelines page. These forms are **required** to successfully administer the School Nutrition Programs. If you have trouble downloading any of these forms, please contact our office at (406) 444-2501.

Major changes to the application include:

- Foster Children are categorically eligible for free school meals.
- Only the last four digits of the signing adult's Social Security Number is required.

Required forms include:

- Public Release
- Letter to Households (*front and back*) and Instructions for Applying
- Free and Reduced-Price School Meals Application 2011-12 (*front and back*)
- Notice to Households of Approval/Denial of Benefits or Notice of Direct Certification
All households must be notified of their eligibility status. Households with children who are denied benefits must be given written notification of the denial. The notification must advise the household of the reason for the denial of benefits, the right to appeal, instruction on how to appeal, and a statement that the family may re-apply for free and reduced price meal benefits at any time during the school year.
- Income Eligibility Guidelines 2011-12

Insert your district's specific information in the **[bold bracketed fields]**. If you make additional changes, you must submit them to the state agency for approval.

Each household that receives SNAP may be Directly Certified through participant reports provided by the Department of Public Health and Human Services. This report will be provided by OPI at the beginning of the school year, three months after the initial effort, and six months after the initial effort so schools can update their benefit issuance list as needed. *Use the Benefit Issuance List of SNAP Participants for all students determined on the basis of these reports. This document is IN PLACE of an application for the students on the list.* Eligibility determinations are valid for the entire school year.